

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-20, and 27-32 remain in the application. Applicant respectfully requests re-examination.

Applicant appreciates the acknowledgement of the claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 and that all certified copies of the priority documents have been received. Applicant appreciates the indication that the drawings filed on December 5, 2001 are accepted.

Claims 1-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over *Humpleman et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,546,419) in view of *Hanai et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,557,585), and further in view of *Latham et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,968,133). Applicant respectfully traverses.

Humpleman discloses a central control system that automatically controls the operations of a plurality of devices connected into a network in a home environment. The devices are typically a PC, digital TV, digital VCR, DVD player, a toaster, a smart card, etc. In order for these devices to operate in coordination with each other, *Humpleman* requires each device to perform a different operation for a currently proceeding event. When it comes to a plurality of devices operating with the same timing for a single event, *Humpleman* teaches that the plurality of devices must adjust the time automatically at various occasions, in advance.

The *Hanai* reference, discloses a broadcast signal receiver that receives time information and automatically sets the time for an internal clock in order to relieve the user of the trouble of setting the time.

The *Latham* reference discloses a system for facilitating a plurality of computers to communicate over a network by utilizing a host computer with an external portion or burb to receive messages from external servers representative of accurate time from one or more peer computers coupled by the network. The software on the external burb processes the messages

and then accurately sets a host computer clock. Servers that are running on an internal burb which may not communicate directly with peer computers, then access the clock to obtain a correct indication of network time without having to communicate directly with the peer computers. The time is then provided to internal clients and this allows the host computer to update its clock without having to use an expensive clock system, and enables it to provide accurate time to process those running on the host, while maintaining a secure isolation.

The present invention on the other hand is directed to a time managing apparatus and method that for each event requests a specified timer module to transmit a standard time, receive the standard time, and based on the received standard time, instruct the specified devices to start executing the events when the event start time is reached.

Where *Humpleman* allows a plurality of devices to operate in coordination with each other by instructing each device to perform a different operation for a current proceeding event, the invention as set forth in claim 1 performs the following steps for each event: request a specified timer module to transmit a standard time and upon receipt of the standard time, and based on the received standard time, instruct the specified devices to start executing the events when the event start time is reached. This is clearly different from the *Humpleman* system, both in structure and in process.

Both *Hanai* and *Humpleman* require their plurality of devices to adjust the time automatically at various occasions, in advance, so that these devices can operate with the same timing for a certain event. The invention as set forth in Claim 1, on the other hand, does not require the plurality of devices to adjust the time. When there is an event to be started at a specified time, a device acquires a standard time from a specified module and starts the event based on the acquired standard time. Thus, the event is performed at the same timing as the

other devices. The invention as set forth in claim 1 directly adjusts the operation timing for each event directly. This is clearly different from the teaching of *Hanai* and *Humpleman*.

Moreover, the invention as set forth in claim 1 is constructed so that it is possible to specify for each event a different device from which a standard time is acquired. This feature allows a plurality of events that are required to be performed in coordination with each other to be performed with the same timing, by specifying the same standard time acquisition modules in advance. This feature also enables different standard time acquisition modules to be specified in connection with events that are not required to be performed in coordination with each other. Also, even if the devices are located in different areas with different local times, there is no need to consider the difference between the local devices.

These advantages of the claimed invention are not taught or suggested by any of the references, *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, or *Latham*, or any combination thereof. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over the combination of *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, and *Latham*.

Claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1, and further limit claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 3 and 4 are also patentable over the combination of *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, and *Latham* for the reasons set forth above for claim 1.

Claim 5 depends from claim 4, and further limits claim 4. Applicant believes that claim 5 is patentable over the combination of *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, or *Latham*, at least for the reasons set forth above for claim 1.

Claim 6 depends from claim 5. Claim 9 depends from claim 6. Both claims indirectly depend from claim 1, and further limit claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are patentable over a combination of *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, or *Latham*, for the reasons set forth above for claim 1.

Claim 10, although independent recites the features set forth above for claim 1, and therefore, it is submitted that claim 10 is also patentable over a combination of *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, and *Latham* for the reasons set forth above for claim 1.

Claim 11 depends from claim 10. Therefore claim 11 like claim 10, it is submitted, is patentable over the combination of *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, and *Latham*.

Claims 12-14 recite the features as discussed above for claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 12-14 are also patentable over the combination of *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, and *Latham* for the reasons set forth above for claim 1.

Claims 15-20 are method claims that correspond to the method performed by the apparatus of claims 1, 6, 10, 12, 13, and 14. It is respectfully submitted that the combination of steps recited in each of these claims patentably define over the combination of *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, and *Latham*.

New claims (27-32) are program claims. They correspond to the process performed by the apparatus as set forth in claims 1, 6, 10, 12, 13, and 14. Applicant believes that these claims are therefore patentable over the combination of *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, and *Latham*, for the reasons set forth above for the apparatus claims.

Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of all the claims over the combination of *Humpleman*, *Hanai*, and *Latham* be withdrawn.

In light of the above amendment and remarks, the applicant believes that all the claims in the application are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that all the claims be allowed and this application passed to issue.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would help further the prosecution of this case, the undersigned attorney can be contacted at the listed telephone number.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on June 30, 2005.

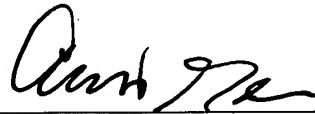
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Signature

Date of Signature: June 30, 2005

Very truly yours,

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